The One Ring

Lake-Town

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...many things have changed in the northern regions of Wilderland since you returned home. Seven years might seem to pass as quick as a heartbeat to the long-lived Elves, but innumerable deeds can be accomplished by industrious Men and Dwarves. I trust my cousin Balin to tell you about all the important matters, and I am sure Gandalf will complete the account with tidings of his own. But I didn't forget how much you love maps, so I resolved to send you one depicting the marvellous city on the Long Lake as it appears today. It was drawn by my brother Óin and I have added some useful notes.

As you will certainly remember, soon after the fall of Smaug and the subsequent destruction of their city, the Lake-men set upon the task of building a new town for themselves. Under the direction of the old Master, they chose a suitable spot higher up the shores of the Long Lake, to the north, to stay well away from the place where the Dragon fell. They worked long and laboriously, sparing no effort to build a city they designed to be more fair and large even than before. To achieve this aim, they received great help from Bard the Dragonslayer, who presented the Lake-people with much gold from the hoard of Smaug, and from the Elvenking, who sent many skilled Elves to aid in the reconstruction.

The new Lake-town rises from the waters of the Long Lake, as the Lake-towns that preceded it. Many wains and carts cross its slender bridge every day, and the surface of the lake itself teems with barges and boats in every month of the year, whether heading for the market-place of Esgaroth, or on their way to the South, North or West. Trade has indeed resumed and it is more prosperous than ever, with much wealth going up and down the river.

Many folks from nearby lands have come to live here, and a forest of trees has been felled to build the stilts needed to support its wooden houses, streets and quays. The city now encompasses a larger area than the one that was once enclosed within the town that Smaug destroyed, and it has been divided into seven main districts - erroneously called 'quarters' by the Lake-people, still used to their smaller home.

You might wonder how it is that I know so much about Esgaroth. This is easily explained: the Kingdom under the Mountain has many interests in this town, and in the coming and going of goods, and I have been personally assigned by King Dáin to oversee our dealings here. This task makes for a very dull occupation, especially for someone who is used to adventuring, or at least to handle hammers and forge-bellows in place of silver pens!

Fortunately, I have taken up residence in a house that I daresay you would find to your liking: it is large and comfortable, and when the weather is clear I enjoy a good view of the Lonely Mountain, beyond the low hills at the far end of the lake. It is found in the best quarter of the city, a spot where the stench of the Long Marshes rarely arrives, as it is turned away by a fresh northerly breeze before it can reach the noses of those who are so fortunate to live here.

It is not by chance that the town-hall is found in this district too, a larger and more magnificent great house than the one you visited, and ruled by a far more pleasant Master of Esgaroth (the old Master having gone to a bitter end, as Balin will certainly tell you...). You might remember him as the former captain of the guard, the first Man of the Lake we met when we first set foot on the bridge to the old Lake-town. He has made quite a splendid career, this one, and I am required to visit him on a regular basis on official errands. We have become quite fond of each other's company, and it is partly on his behalf that I am asking you if it would be possible to purchase from you a barrel of pipe-weed from the Southfarthing (Longbottom leaf, if at all possible, a particular favourite discovered when I used to pass through the Shire in our wandering days...). Talk of tolls, portage and customs duties is a taxing endeavour, and we have almost drained my supply...

Excerpt from a letter from Glóin, son of Gróin, accompanying a map of Lake-town carried by Balin, son of Fundin, when he went to visit Bilbo Baggins in the Shire, in the autumn of year 2949.

the map of - lake-town -

Rivalled in the North only by the city of Dale, Esgaroth is a unique sight. In a region where most populated settlements are no larger than a group of farmsteads surrounded by hedges, Lake-town is an island made of timber rising from the waters of the Long Lake, and crowded with roofs, streets and towers.

Esgaroth was originally settled as a trading port when "the North was rich and prosperous". It achieved its independence when the Lord of Dale allowed its citizens to appoint a Master, chosen from the old and wise. For centuries, Lake-town has endured thanks to its position, set strategically between the Woodland Realm, the Kingdom under the Mountain, and the city of Dale.

Today Esgaroth is a thriving port, measuring almost thrice the size of the town that Smaug destroyed. Beyond the falls to the south of the Long Lake, the Celduin River runs for many leagues, until it reaches the great inland Sea of Rhûn, past the land of Dorwinion. From there and beyond, travellers arrive in Lake-town aboard trading ships and rafts, bringing wares and goods for sale at the markets of the city. The map of Esgaroth on pages 17-18 shows the home of the river-faring Men of the Lake as it appears in the year 2949, when its population has grown to over one thousand people. The following sections give information about the town's different districts, and the buildings contained in them.

Gatehouse and bridge defenses

The great bridge that connects Esgaroth to the shores of the Long Lake ends in a tall **Gatehouse** (5). It serves the purpose of guarding the access to the city, should enemies succeed in taking the defenders unawares so that they are unable to throw down and destroy the bridge. The gatehouse lets archers attack assailants from a protected vantage point, and murder-holes allow other defenders to rain down rocks on attackers trying to smash the gates.

The palisade to the left and right of the Gatehouse allows more archers to target foes on the bridge, catching them in a deadly crossfire. Should the enemy penetrate the Gatehouse, they would find themselves in a killing zone, bordered by the **Tollhouse** (15) and an encircling palisade. From the top of the palisade, rows of archers would rain arrows down on the attackers.

The large **Tollhouse** (15) is defended by stout wooden gates. Here, those who enter the city are inspected and merchants must pay a tax to town officials for the right to enter and sell their wares in the town markets. The **Guard barracks** (8) and the **Bowmen's Guild-hall** (1) stand conveniently close to the palisade defending the Gatehouse, to the left and right of the bridge defences, respectively. A suspended bridge connects the courtyard behind the Guard barracks to a detached building, serving as the town gaol. Here are led those who break the laws upheld by the town council.

Town Guards

A number of armed guards are assigned every day and night to guard the great bridge, to man the various city gates, and to protect the Town-hall and its main occupants - the Master of Esgaroth and his councillors. The Town guard is an armed force under the direct command of the council of Esgaroth, and its main duty is to keep watch on specific assigned places, leaving the job of dealing with any other types of trouble to the Town watchmen.

Guards are trained and equipped at the **Guard barracks** (8). In the case of an armed threat or other serious disturbance, the Town guard is joined by the archers of the Bowman's Guild.

Attribute level:	3
Specialities:	-
Distinctive Features:	Stern, Suspicious
Relevant skills:	Awareness ♦♦, <u>Search</u> ♦♦, Spear ♦♦
Endurance:	17

Merchants' district

The widest gap opening in the middle of Lake-town is the **Market-pool** (10), and the nearby open area is the city's main **Market square** (11). This is certainly the largest and busiest district of the town, where a large share of the town population lives and merchants from distant lands come to meet those of Esgaroth, Dale, Erebor and the Woodland Realm, and where farmers from the nearby lands come to sell their goods.

Boats and barges from the south unload here their cargoes of wine, olive oil, spices and salt, pottery, dyes and other more exotic goods, and fill the town warehouses. Then, they are loaded once again with grain and wool, the handiwork of Dwarven smiths, and with the wares sold by the vendors who manage the stalls of drapers, leather dressers and skinners, shoemakers, saddlers, and other craftsmen.

The trading of livestock is dealt with inside the fenced-off area close to the Market-pool; here, farmers sell their cattle, sheep and poultry to the butchers of Esgaroth, who will prepare the meat for sale along Butchers' Quay, together with fish and wild fowl. Farmers who don't have animals to trade are allowed to sell cheese, eggs, roots and herbs along Bridge Street as pedlars.

Everything that can be sold or bought in Lake-town is on offer in this district, with the exception of timber, gold and precious stones - these materials are sold and bought exclusively within the so-called 'Elven quarter'. The finest alehouses and inns are to be found along Bridge Street, the street that connects the city gates to the Market square. Here, wandering musicians find shelter under its overhanging gables to entertain the passers-by.

The **Merchants' Guild-hall** (12) is one of the largest buildings in Lake-town, and functions as the communal meeting hall and hospital for all the members of the guild of Merchants. An association created for the mutual aid of its members, the guild holds considerable power, as the Master of the city is often chosen from its affiliates. The hall is used by the merchants of the guild to conduct their affairs, as a meeting place for private businesses, and to give assistance to those members that cannot exercise their trade due to old age or sickness. In agreement with the city council, the night-watch starts its progress through the city streets from the Merchants' Guild-hall, as most of the town granaries and warehouses are located in the vicinity. Warning trumpets are always ready to sound from the top of its tower in the case of fire or other impending danger.

Merchants

A merchant is a member of a family who prospers by dealing in the buying and selling of wares. Normally, merchants from Lake-town sell local products (like wool, iron tools, painted glass) and buy foreign goods (like wine, spices and salt, dyes for the colouring of textiles) to sell them in the markets of Esgaroth and Dale. Merchants visit both cities regularly and own small fleets of boats to carry their wares up and down the river. Many firstborn sons in a merchant family spend a good part of the year abroad, as they are sent to distant markets aboard a merchant vessel to supervise the family business.

Merchants are busy men, always distrustful of strangers but possibly interested in the services of adventurers who proved trustworthy in the past. Aging merchants and trading matrons are often accompanied by their older sons, brash youths with expensive clothes and quick tongues.

Attribute Level: 4
Specialities: Trading
Distinctive Features: Cautious
Relevant skills: Insight ♦♦, Persuade ♦♦♦

Dwarf Smiths

Many tireless smiths work their forges under the Mountain to make weapons, armour and tools that will eventually make their way to the hands of warriors, farmers and craftsmen all over Wilderland. Often, apprentices are sent to the market square of Esgaroth to sell their handiwork to local ironmongers, or to merchants headed to distant lands.

It is said that their work cannot match that of the Dwarven smiths of old, but they still make stout coats of mail and sharp blades and their workshops are always crowded with the young sons of Barding nobles and craftsmen, sent there as apprentices in the hope that one day they will learn their secrets.

Attribute level: 5
Specialities: Smith-craft
Distinctive Features: Grim, Secretive
Relevant skills: Craft ♦♦♦♦

Artisans' district

North of the Market-pool, the streets of Lake-town become narrow and twisted. Here, small, two-storied houses lean one against the other, creating a maze of darkened alleys. These are the workshops and living quarters of the many artisans and craftsmen in Esgaroth, a thousand-faceted expression of the burgeoning prosperity of the town.

Many-coloured and fanciful signs hang from the workshop fronts, in the attempt to give some order to the general chaos and identify precisely the trade of each craftsman. But the confusion is only an initial distraction, as the local artisans have divided the quarter neatly, dedicating even the smallest alley to a different trade.

Drapers, leather dressers and skinners, tailors, saddlers and shoemakers give their names to the narrow lanes in the interior of the district. Closer to the Market square is Millers Row, where most of the bread bakers have their shops, but the Street of Bowyers and Fletchers is probably the most prominent, with its window shutters painted in black and white checkers.

On the Day of the Black Arrow (1st of November), a procession of artisans carrying aloft the symbols of their trade and led by the Master of the town starts here and opens the festivities known as Dragontide.

With so many of the workshops in the Artisans district requiring the use of furnaces, ovens or kilns, it should come as no surprise to find here the main barracks of the **Town Watch** (17). Its tall tower lets the watchmen enjoy a good view of the town, and also guards over the nearby merchant warehouses.

Craftsmen

Many of the people who come to live in Esgaroth every year are artisans, or become apprentices to some craftsman, as the city offers many opportunities for those who are willing to exercise or learn a trade. Every year, the Kingdom under the Mountain, the city of Dale and the new Lake-town need more people who can bake bread, sew clothes, make shoes, dye fabrics, weave tapestries, build houses, carts, boats, pottery and so on.

Craftsmen are usually peaceful individuals, dedicated to their chosen crafts. Most of the craftsmen of Lake-town operate in small workshops built on the ground floor of a building in the Artisans' district, and live upstairs on the first floor with their families (tanners are the exception, as they are forbidden by decree to exercise their trade within the city, for reasons of the foul smell produced by their work).

Attribute Level: 4
Specialities: choose one related to the craftsman's trade
Distinctive Features: Determined, Gruff
Relevant skills: Craft ♦♦♦♦

Town Watch

When the very foundations of a town are built from wood, its safety relies on ever-watchful eyes, ready to notice the tiniest flicker of an unguarded flame and raise the alarm. The watchmen of Esgaroth are a group of one hundred volunteers who patrol the town at night, ready to quench any unattended fire. For this purpose, every watchman carries a small bucket made with rope sealed with pitch, a small axe, and a small brass trumpet to send a warning blast if help is required. In the case of a larger fire, the watchmen can rapidly retrieve ladders, hooks and other useful equipment from their barracks.

In addition to their duty as firefighters, the watchmen of Lake-town serve as the city's night watch to guard the streets and buildings from burglars, thieves, or other kind of troublemakers. One in every three watchmen (called a 'captain') carries a buckler and a sword. But if any serious

threat arises, the watchmen are instructed to sound their warning trumpets and wait for the town guard and the archers of the Bowmen's Guild to show up.

Town Watchman
Attribute level: 4
Specialities: -
Distinctive Features: Hardy, Wary
Relevant skills: Athletics ♦♦, Awareness ♦♦

Watch Captain
Attribute level: 6
Specialities: -
Distinctive Features: Just, Patient
Relevant skills: Sword ♦♦
Endurance: 20

Elven quarter

The corner to the southwest is entirely occupied by the district known today as the 'Elven quarter', as since the re-founding of the town it has been traditionally inhabited by diplomats, emissaries, merchants and traders coming from the Woodland Realm. All timber coming from Mirkwood is bought and sold here, as is most of the production of the Elven woodwrights from Thranduil's kingdom. A canal separates the area from the nearby Merchants' quarter, and access to the district can be gained only by crossing one of its three bridges (or by boat). While nominally everyone is allowed to enter the district freely, anyone who attempts to cross or disembark into the Elven quarter is likely to be approached by two or more armed Wood-elves and questioned about the reasons for their visit. In particular, anyone openly carrying weapons will be stopped and asked to leave their weapons in custody, or turn back. This is probably the most noticeable proof of the power that the Elvenking has over the government of Lake-town.

The Dwarves of the **Glittering Gate** (6) are the main exception to the all-Elf population of the district. These goldsmiths and gemcutters and their young Barding apprentices are the only individuals in Lake-town allowed by the Master of Esgaroth to deal in the buying and selling of gems and gold, either wrought or unwrought. Their best customers are mostly Elves, generally on behalf of their king, who is notably fond of jewels, but any adventurer looking for the appraisal of a newly-discovered treasure should come here, as should anyone wanting to have a gem cunningly set upon a necklace, or a ring cast out of gold and engraved.

Raft-elves

Wood-elves from the villages that rise along the shores of the Forest River serve as boatmen for the Elvenking. They man the rafts that are sent up to Lake-town to retrieve the goods needed in the Woodland Realm and can often be seen on its quays, or sitting inside its Town-Hall, drinking and chatting with local dignitaries. They also lead the small and slim boats used by Elves to move about the city.

Raft-elves are often more forthcoming with foreigners than the average Elf from Mirkwood, and get along well with the Men of the lake, unless their allegiance is brought into question.

Attribute Level: 4
Specialities: Boating
Distinctive Features: Proud
Relevant skills: Travel ♦♦♦

Silvan Elf Emissaries

A Silvan Elf emissary is a trustworthy follower of the Elvenking, sent to conduct all negotiations as a delegate in a foreign land. As a custom, King Thranduil picks his representatives among the Raft-elves, to profit from their familiarity with the world outside the forest of Mirkwood.

Emissaries are usually tactful and subtle diplomats, and attentive observers ready to pick up details that might prove useful in their dealings.

Attribute level: 6
Specialities: Elven-lore
Distinctive Features: Cunning, Secretive, Suspicious
Relevant skills: Courtesy ♦♦♦, Insight ♦♦

Silvan Elf Sentinels

Whenever a Wood-elf emissary is sent abroad, he is accompanied by a number of young Elf warriors, to act as his bodyguards. Sentinels are unwaveringly loyal to their king, and will never forsake the duty they have been assigned to. This might even lead them to ignore a plea for help, if giving it would mean abandoning their assignment.

Attribute level: 6
Specialities: -
Distinctive Features: Steadfast, Keen-eyed
Relevant skills: Athletics ♦♦, Bow ♦♦♦, Spear ♦♦
Endurance: 18

Town-hall's quarter

The area surrounding the **Town-hall** (16) is considered the best quarter of the city. It is accessible only through a gate manned by guards at all times, and it contains the greater houses and the most comfortable lodgings.

When the arrival of many folks from the surrounding areas made it apparent that the new Lake-town was bound to become much bigger than the one destroyed by the fall of Smaug, the older and wealthier merchant families of Esgaroth chose the best spot to build their own residences, and used the tallest and most robust stilts to have the area stand high above the surface of the lake.

As a consequence, the houses here are warmer and drier, and considered generally more wholesome by their affluent denizens. Today, the majority of the town councillors and other officials live in this area, as do the many ambassadors and emissaries who come to Lake-town on errands from their rulers (the Elves of Mirkwood being the notable exception).

The **Town-hall** (16) dominates the landscape and is the most impressive building of the entire city. Its great hall is the venue for the election of a new Master and where all business discussions which require the presence of community representatives are held. A chamber at the west end is used for the council to meet in private, and is known as the Justice Room, as the councillors gather here especially for court trials. The chamber at the east end is where the town records are kept.

Barding Nobles

Several eager young men paid homage to Bard when he first announced he was about to reclaim Dale. Today they attend the king in his palace, serving as counsellors, officers and right-hand men, or are sent abroad as his emissaries and diplomats.

A Barding noble is a warrior first and foremost, not yet used to the subtlety of politics, something that often put them at odds with the consummate manoeuvrings of their direct counterparts and neighbours, the town councillors of Lake-town.

Attribute Level: 6
Specialities: Region-lore
Distinctive Features: Bold, Proud
Relevant skills: Inspire ♦♦♦, Persuade ♦, Long sword ♦♦♦
Endurance: 20

Dwarf Notables

Since the re-founding of the Kingdom under the Mountain, most able-bodied veterans of the Battle of Five Armies have been charged with some office on behalf of King Dáin. Chief among them are the ten companions who survived the Quest of Erebor: all of them now serve as the King's advisors, stewards, treasurers, chancellors, and envoys.

A Dwarf notable belongs to the ruling class of the realm of Erebor; most of them are rich beyond measure, or soon will be as the prosperity of the kingdom increases. Most preserve an adventurous edge, a restless side that might eventually lead them to leave their newfound home.

Attribute level: 6
Specialities: Old lore
Distinctive Features: Bold, Gruff, Lordly
Relevant skills: Awe ♦♦♦, Courtesy ♦♦♦, Battle ♦♦

Town Councillors

When a successful merchant from Esgaroth retires from his trading activity he might be invited by the Master of the town to join the town council. This invitation cannot be refused, and the new councillor will join his peers at the Town-hall every time that an office requires his presence, for as long as his health will permit him. Councillors put their extensive trading experience at the service of the population of Esgaroth, for example discussing river-tolls with delegates from the Woodland Realm or the rent of warehouses with the emissary of King Bard.

A town councillor is often an aging but still energetic individual who is turning his ability in making a profit into something that should benefit his community. If he makes a good career his name might one day be added to the roll of the benefactors of the town, a parchment kept in the town-hall, or even considered for the title of Master of Esgaroth - if he is deemed to be worthy of the honour when the time comes to elect a new Master.

Attribute level: 4
Specialities: Trading
Distinctive Features: Clever, Fair-spoken
Relevant skills: <u>Courtesy</u> ♦♦♦, Lore ♦♦

Residential district

This is the part of the town that has seen the fastest growth since its construction. More stilts are placed every year, and more houses are raised to accommodate the increasing number of farmers, herdsmen, woodsmen and hunters who abandon their former occupations to settle in Lake-town and profit from its prosperity.

Originally, only the families of the boatmen, shipbuilders and workers employed in the nearby shipyards district lived here. Their houses were built by decree of the old Master of Esgaroth, and it has been their custom to raise them using materials available to carpenters and shipwrights. This tradition has given the quarter its most peculiar look, with its brightly-painted houses and fronts fitted with ropes and canvas. Today, some of these houses are given to adventurers who have earned the honorific title of *Burgess* and can thus live in them as tenants.

The largest great house of the district is the **Hospital** (9), a building erected for the care of the sick, the poor, the old and the infirm of Esgaroth. Several wives serve in this house voluntarily, cleaning, feeding, clothing and housing the sick. The house is high-ceilinged, with tall windows, to let the air circulate freely and dispel any 'bad air' that might linger where the sick are resting.

Hospital Healers

The wives assisting the sick at the Hospital are wise women skilled in the arts of healing illness, wound and hurt. Some of them are learned in herb-lore, and can identify which plants have curative properties and administer cures based on their use. Others are midwives, experienced in caring for women during childbirth, but also capable of setting a broken bone or closing an open wound.

Attribute level: 4
Specialities: Leechcraft, or Herb-lore
Distinctive Features: Merciful, Patient
Relevant skills: Healing ♦♦♦, Lore ♦♦

G – Shipyards district

The shipyard district is entirely given over to the building of rafts, boats and everything else that is needed for the main pursuit of Lake-town: commerce. Every day a small forest of ancient oak-trees is split by an army of carpenters to create the long planks needed to shape the hulls of boats. Smiths hammer on the anvil at any hour of the day to produce the thousands of wrought-iron rivets and roves needed to fix those planks to keels. Hundred of oars are carved out of tall spruce trees. Lengths of rope are stretched taut between the buildings to dry under the sun. Sailcloths are cut and sewn artfully by experienced craftsmen and then painted with the colours of the city. Barrel builders work incessantly to provide the countless containers needed every year to ship out local products or bring in fine wines and other exotic commodities.

The majority of the boats built here are skiffs and longships commissioned by private merchants, but a number of larger longships have lately been ordered by the town council. The smallest boats are the ones employed in Lake-town for everyday use, round-bottomed skiffs allowing for two, four or eight rear-facing oarsmen. Longships used for the transportation of goods or armed men can be between 50 to 80 feet long. They are fitted with oars along almost the entire length of the boat itself, and can have from ten to twenty rowing benches (the Master of town's great gilded boat sports 30 rowing benches). Despite their length, even the largest longships built in Lake-town are designed to be relatively light, as they need to be lifted out of the water and loaded on the wheeled carts used along the Stair of Girion (the paved trackway described on page 129 of the Loremaster's Guide).

Boatmen of Esgaroth

There are many boatmen in Lake-town, from those who man the small boats sent to tow the rafts of barrels coming down from the Forest River, to the more adventurous ones who leave their families for months to lead their ships to lands as distant as Dorwinion and the Sea of Rhûn. They are all very experienced and, especially in the case of the smaller craft, they often own the boat they employ in their activities (the larger longships are often owned by wealthy merchant families instead).

Attribute level: 5
Specialities: Boating
Distinctive Features: Hardy, Keen-eyed
Relevant skills: Athletics ♦♦♦, Travel ♦♦

Things to do while in - Lake-town -

New Fellowship Phase Undertakings

These additional undertakings can be chosen by companions spending a Fellowship phase in Lake-town.

Go to the Market-pool

Men spoke of the (...) wealth over and to spare with which to buy rich things from the South...

While most of the expenses that characters can face are dealt with using a hero's Standard of Living, there are some things that only Treasure can buy. Companions spending time in Lake-town can take advantage of the largest market to be found in the North, and spend some of their accumulated wealth to gain some useful items.

When heroes choose this undertaking, they can spend 2 Treasure and select one of the options shown below to acquire an item that gives them a bonus of +1 to all rolls made using the corresponding skill. Each option can be taken up to two times, for a total bonus of +2 (representing an upgrade of the original item, or a new, additional item of the same type).

> *For example, Lifstan visits the market to buy himself a lyre. He spends 2 Treasure, and gains a bonus to Song equal to +1. In a later Fellowship phase, he returns to the same luthier to have his lyre newly strung with silver cords, and sees his bonus raised to +2.*

These numerical bonuses are applied until the hero enjoying them acquires a new level in the modifed skill. When this happens, the companion loses the associated bonuses, but is again entitled to spend Treasure to gain them back.

> *When Lifstan finally raises his Song ♦ to Song ♦♦, he loses the bonus associated with his silver-strung lyre as his proficiency now overshadows the quality of his gear. He will soon pay a visit to his preferred luthier in Lake-town...*

When spending a Fellowship phase in Lake-town, choose this undertaking and spend 2 Treasure to gain a bonus to one of the following:

- Find a goldsmith to have precious stones set into your sword's hilt, or gold wrought into a chain, torque, ring, or other piece of jewellery. Gain a bonus to **Awe**.
- Visit an ironmonger or a woodwright to buy fine tools appropriate to your favourite trade. Gain a bonus to **Craft**.
- Buy a musical instrument of superior make, be it a fiddle, a flute, a drum or a viol, or visit a master luthier to build you a new harp or lyre. Gain a bonus to **Song**.
- Learn how to prepare salves and healing herbs and acquire the necessary materials from a hospital healer. Gain a bonus to **Healing**.
- Buy robust rope, walking staves, comfortable sleeping cots and a regular supply of *cram* from a baker (biscuits the Lake-men prepare for long journeys). Gain a bonus to **Travel**.
- Visit the shop of a tailor or shoemaker to have a rich dress or a pair of quality shoes made. Gain a bonus to **Courtesy**.
- Search the market to find a rare book or old map, or parchment, quills and ink for you to write. Gain a bonus to **Lore**.
- See a master hunter to get all you need for your hunting exploits. Gain a bonus to **Hunting**.

Collect Marsh Herbs

...everywhere there was a wealth of sweet-smelling herbs and shrubs.

Herbs and curative plants may be found along the Forest River banks, where many ponds and pools signal the slow encroachment of the marshes. Companions may wander the countryside in search of such useful plants. But the undertaking is not devoid of risks...

When spending a Fellowship phase in Lake-town, choose this undertaking to make a roll on the table below. A hero possessing the *Herb-lore* Trait must roll too, but considers any result different from an 👁 as if it was a ᚹ. The properties of the different herbs are found on pages 21 and 22.

	Collect a herb of any type except Red Water-lily, or roll again.
1	*Nothing useful!*
2-3	*Reedmace*
4-5	*Kingcup*
6-7	*Hagweed*
8-9	*White Water-lily*
10	*Red Water-lily*
	You may roll again or stop searching. If you roll another EYE on the next roll, gain one Shadow point as you stray too deep into an unsavoury area of Mirkwood or the Long Marshes.

Silver and Gold

In the North, a form of currency is starting to circulate once again, especially in the city of Lake-town and along its main trading routes. The coins that are exchanged are mainly *gold pieces, silver pennies* and *copper coins.*

Gold pieces are very valuable and rare - the majority of those that are seen in Dale, Erebor or Lake-town come from the treasure of Smaug, and most people show some propensity to hoard them and put them away. Silver pennies are more common - a gold piece is worth about 20 silver pennies. Copper coins are those of the least worth, with 1 Silver penny being the equivalent of 12 copper coins.

Treasure and Money

The One Ring uses a fairly abstract system for money, with a Treasure rating corresponding to broad improvements in standing and wealth. But some players prefer to have a way to gauge their accumulated riches in more familiar terms. So, how much wealth does Treasure really represent?

- In broad terms, 1 Treasure can be considered to be equivalent to 1 Gold piece.

1 gold piece = 1 Treasure
1 gold piece = 20 silver pennies, 240 copper coins
1 silver penny = 12 copper coins

The following lists are provided to give a measure of the worth of wealth in the civilised areas of Wilderland. The various coins are abbreviated as follows:

gold piece = (g), silver penny = (s), copper coin = (c).

Standards of Living upkeep for 1 year

Poor	1g
Frugal	3g
Martial	6g
Prosperous	12g
Rich	24g

Upkeep costs indicated are minimums, and include household costs for more affluent individuals.

Customary Weregild for the Dead under the laws of Dale

Weregild for a common man	200s
Weregild for a landless noble	600s
Weregild for a thane	1200s

Market Prices

1 old, or half-starved pony	3s-4s
1 healthy pony	8s-10s
1 draught horse	10s-20s
1 riding horse	1g
1 war horse	2g-4g
1 cow	8s
1 pig	2s
1 sheep	1s
2 chickens	1c

Receive Title (Burgess)

Lake-town is a crossroads of opportunities for those who seek adventure; every year, warriors and wanderers of all sorts cross the bridge to enter the city. If the deeds of an adventurer have clearly benefitted Lake-town or the interests of its council, the Loremaster may announce that the Master of Esgaroth summons him to the Town-hall to award him the title of Burgess.

To accept the title, the adventurer must spend the Fellowship phase in Esgaroth and choose the Receive Title undertaking.This title invests the hero with honorary citizenship. It is not transferable, and may be revoked at any time, should the recipient act in a way considered contrary to the interests of the town council, or should otherwise prove unworthy to bear it. In game terms, being a Burgess means basically two things:

- The Standing rating of the adventurer now measures also his repute in the city of Esgaroth. The hero may now affect the narration of a Year's end Fellowship phase as if he belonged to the Men of the Lake culture. Additionally, when a companion spends a Fellowship phase in Lake-town, his score is not reduced, as if he returned home (see Standing Upkeep on p.169 of the Adventurer's Guide).
- The hero can dwell in a house owned by the town council (generally in the residential district). The characteristics of the house are proportionate to the character's Standard of living.

- Dragontide -

...the desolation was now filled with birds and blossoms in spring and fruit and feasting in autumn.

After almost two centuries of misery, the people of Wilderland are finally free to celebrate harvest and planting festivals, Yuletide, the breaking of Spring and the end of Winter without impending threats. The streets of Lake-town are crowded for the most part of the year, but teem with activity especially in the period that goes from September to December, when many crops are sown and animals are slaughtered, and people from the neighbouring lands enter the town leaving their woods and fields and pastures to bring their goods to the market.

Many foreigners from all over Wilderland join the townsfolk of Esgaroth in the festivities called Dragontide, held to celebrate the death of Smaug. This is a three-day festival held in Lake-town from the first of November to the third, celebrating the killing of Smaug the Dragon and the end of the harvest season. All three days are given to much eating, drinking and singing, as hundreds come to enter the town, or camp on the grounds cleared for the purpose on the shore at the end of its bridge.

The first day opens with the most popular archery contest of the region, the Day of the Black Arrow: the best bowmen of the region put their skills to the test in different games.

On the morn of the second day the richest farmers of the area cross the bridge in a procession of carts decorated with garlands of flowers and colourful ribbons, carrying their choicest cattle destined to be slaughtered for winter food. In the evening, bonfires lit in the fields illuminate the surrounding countryside, while villagers throw the bones of the slaughtered animals into the flames for good luck (not in Lake-town itself though, as for obvious reasons bonfires are strictly forbidden inside its boundaries).

The festival draws to a close on the eve of the third of November, when artificers from Dale inflame the surface of the lake with a spectacular display of fireworks (the creation of which is an art practiced in Dale since its re-founding and seemingly inspired and encouraged by no less than the wizard Gandalf).

Day of the Black Arrow (1st November)

Held in honour of Bard the Dragonslayer, the archery contest attracts dozens of bowmen from all over the region. While any man or woman able to bend a bow is allowed to participate, the event sees its main attraction in the fierce competition between the members of the Bowmen's Guild of Lake-town and the Royal Archers of Dale. Elves from the Woodland Realm have mostly abstained from taking part in the contest to this day, seemingly out of respect for their king, who is said to hold in contempt such fruitless trifles.

The event features three different competitions: an open ***Wreath shoot***, an open **Wand shoot**, and a **Ring shoot** reserved to the winner of the two open competitions and to representatives of the Bowmen's Guild of Esgaroth and the Royal Archers of Dale. All archery butts are set up beyond the bridge, upon the shores of the Long Lake, as there are no areas in Lake-town that allow for shooting at range.

This chapter describes each competition, with its own rules and scoring procedures, in the case one or more companions want to measure their archery skills against those of others.

The Wreath shoot

The Wreath shoot opens the Day of the Black Arrow contest. It is played in two rounds, with archers aiming at a wreath decorated with vines and flowers, nailed to a wide wooden board. After the first round, the target is moved to a greater distance:

- On the first round, the shot difficulty is set at TN 16.
- On the second round, the difficulty is raised to TN 18.

Archery Rounds

In most archery contests held in the North, archers are allowed to carry and use only two arrows for the length of the contest. Each shoot is played out in a number of rounds. During each round, the contestants can loose both their arrows once, in an attempt to achieve a better shot or to improve their score (see *Scoring* under every shoot description below).

But beware: If the shooting roll is a simple Failure, or a success, the archer may collect the arrow to use it again in a future round. If the shooting roll is a Failure and the Feat die yields a icon, the archer has sent the arrow flying astray and must continue the shoot with one arrow less. Archers who lose both arrows are out of the shoot entirely.

Preparation

At the beginning of each round, archers can make an Awareness roll with TN 14 to adjust their shots and compensate for the strength of the wind, the distance, and so on:

Succeeding in the Awareness test gains an archer one extra Success die to use in the subsequent shooting rolls, a great success gives two dice, and an extraordinary success gets three dice.

An archer can spend these bonus dice in any way he sees fit - he might add them all to the same roll, or divide them among the two rolls of a round. When a round is over, any unused bonus dice are lost (naturally, companions taking part in an archery contest use their Bow or Great Bow skill to shoot at the target).

Scoring

Contestants must shoot their arrows inside the circle inscribed within the wreath, or at least hit the wreath itself.

- An archer who succeeds in a shooting roll scores 1 point on a success (the arrow hit the wreath), 2 points on a great success (shot inside the wreath), or 3 points on an extraordinary success (shot in the middle of the wreath).

Points gained in the Wreath shoot will be added to those scored in the following Wand shoot, to determine who will earn the right to compete in the Ring shoot.

The Wand shoot

The contestants shoot at a wand, a straight branch stripped of its bark and measuring between two and four inches in width. All contestants are given two rounds, but this time an archer must stop if he fails to hit the wand in the first round. An archer who is stopped keeps the points he scored so far.

- On each round, the shot difficulty is set at TN 18.

Scoring

The archers need not embed the arrow in the wand to score points, but doing so improves their score.

- An archer who succeeds in a shooting roll scores 1 point on a success (the arrow grazes the wand), 2 points on a great success (the arrow hits but glances off the wand), or 3 points on an extraordinary success (the arrow sticks into the wand!). In case of a tie, the tied archers are given another round.

Open Shoots Scoring

Points gained in the Wand shoot are now added to those scored in the preceding Wreath shoot. The archer who achieves the highest score is declared the winner by the Master of the town. In case of a tie, all tying archers are given permission to enter the Ring shoot, having proved their skill.

The winner of the two open shoots dons the wreath used as target in the first competition and is given a garland to wear on the left arm: he has gained the right to enter the Ring shoot!

The Ring shoot

Shooting the ring is the main competition of the day. Following tradition, this shoot is reserved to members of the Bowmen's Guild of Esgaroth and the Royal Archers of Dale, and to the wearer of the wreath and garland.

A wide wooden board painted and shaped to look like a Dragon with spread wings is set as a target, and a wooden ring is nailed where the hollow of its left breast should be. Each archer is allowed one round of shooting at the ring.

When all the archers have shot, only those who succeeded in hitting the target can recover their arrows and continue the shoot. Then, the ring is removed and is replaced by a smaller ring.

- The difficulty to shoot the first ring is set at TN 16. The TN is raised by one level (+2) for every passing round.

Scoring

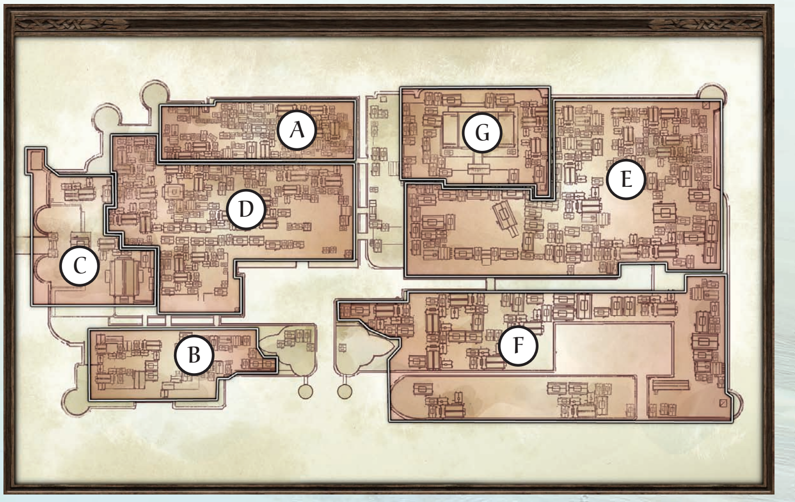
There is no proper scoring procedure in a Ring shoot. Rounds of shooting continue until only one archer remains, or until everyone fails. When only one contestant remains, he or she is declared the champion of the day.

The Winner of the Black Arrow

The archer who wins the Ring shoot is given the Black Arrow, a replica of the famed dart that killed Smaug, cast in solid gold with its fletching painted in black enamel.

The prize is received from the hands of the previous champion, or from the Master of the town if no one was declared champion the year before. The winner holds the title of champion until another archer proves his or her worth by winning another Ring shoot during a future Day of the Black Arrow.

- Until that time, the holder of the Black Arrow is recognised as such by most people in the North of Wilderland. This special renown translates into a bonus of +2 to the Tolerance rating of any encounter involving Bardings or Men of the Lake, and of +1 with most of the other folks in Wilderland.



A. Artisans' district
B. Elven quarter
C. Gatehouse and bridge defences
D. Merchants' district
E. Residential district
F. Shipyards' district
G. Town Hall's quarter

- Lake-town -

1. Bowmen's Guild-hall
2. Bridge Street
3. Butchers' Quay
4. Gaol
5. Gatehouse
6. Glittering Gate
7. Granaries and Warehouses
8. Guard barracks
9. Hospital
10. Market-pool
11. Market square
12. Merchants' Guild-hall
13. River trade Tollhouse
14. Street of bowyers and fletchers
15. Tollhouse
16. Town-hall
17. Town watch barracks
18. Water-gate

Adversaries

When one or more companions want to take part in an archery contest, the Loremaster must determine the performance of the opposition, to find out if the heroes prevail over their adversaries or not. The procedure used for the two open shoots is different than the one used for the Ring shoot, as shown below.

Loremaster Scores for the Open Shoots

To gauge the opposition faced by the players, the Loremaster generates a score in points, representing the best score attained by the archers competing against the companions. To do so, the Loremaster rolls one or two Success dice for every round of each shoot, possibly at the same time when the players are resolving their own rounds.

The way the results are taken into consideration depends roughly on how many competitors have been attracted by the event. The Loremaster must determine whether the event is of *local* import, of *regional* stature, or is a *kingly* event. At the very beginning of the campaign, the Day of the Black Arrow is considered a *local* event, but by 2950 it reaches *regional* stature. Later in the campaign it might attain kingly status.

The event is...

- *Local:* the event only attracts competitors from the neighbouring lands - a maximum of fifty contestants: the Loremaster's score in points for each round is determined by rolling *two Success dice and picking the lowest result.*

- *Regional:* the competition is renowned throughout the region (for example, Wilderland) and the number of contestants is between one hundred and three hundred competitors: the Loremaster's score in points for each round is determined by rolling *one Success die.*

- *Kingly:* the fame of the competition has been carried beyond the farthest boundaries, and some participants might indeed come from exotic lands in the South or West. The total exceeds three hundred participants: the Loremaster's score in points for each round is determined by rolling *two Success dice and choosing the highest result.*

By the end of both shoots, the Loremaster will have a total score of points to compare against that of the players. If the Loremaster's score is higher than any of the players', a Loremaster character is declared the winner of the open shoots, and the heroes are left watching the Ring shoot as spectators.

Opponents for the Ring Shoot

The Ring shoot sees one member of the Bowmen of Esgaroth and one from the Royal Archers of Dale face each other and the winner (or, rarely, the winners) of the open shoots. If one or more companions make it to the Ring shoot, the Loremaster can use the write-ups for the Royal Archers and the Bowmen of the Guild to fully play out the shoot.

In time, the Loremaster will probably do better to flesh out the opposing competitors, especially if a Guild Bowman or a Royal Archer wins the Ring shoot twice or more in a row. Such a Loremaster character could be used to create a recurring rival for the archers in the company.

Champions

The two organisations follow different procedures to choose their respective champions. Usually, the Guild Bowmen keep an eye on the performance of their members during the whole year, and then their representative is chosen by a small council of their older members, all veterans of the Battle of Five Armies. Generally, the veterans tend to prize an archer who has trained hard and shown a tangible improvement in his ability to use the bow.

- To be chosen as a champion of the guild, a Man of the Lake character must possess the *Bowman of the Guild* virtue, and must have gained a new level in either his **Bow** or **Great Bow** skills during the current year. Finally, the companion must have a Standing rating of at least 3.

To choose their champion, the Royal Archers of Dale hold a small archery contest during the summer, in the presence of King Bard. The winner of the contest is chosen as their champion.

Bowmen of the Guild

A law passed by the new Master and his councillors requires that all inhabitants of Lake-town between the ages of 16 and 35 must train in the use of the bow or great bow. While every true Man of the Lake is at least a passable archer, only the best among them are admitted to the Bowmen's Guild. Its members are not men-at-arms, but free men who in times of danger are required to leave their homes with bow in hand to muster at the city gates, as soon as they are summoned by the sound of warning trumpets. The guildsmen do not wear a livery, but they all use dark-coloured arrows in their archery (as the Lake-men always did). To this day, all members of the guild keep Bard the Bowman (as they call him) in the greatest esteem, as he was from Esgaroth and a member of the guild, but they despise the Royal Archers of Dale with a passion. Many archers from the guild are exceptional marksmen who were with Bard when he killed the Dragon and who fought valiantly in the Battle of Five Armies.

Attribute level:	7
Specialities:	Dragon-lore
Distinctive Features:	Hardened, Trusty
Relevant skills:	Awareness ♦♦, Great Bow ♦♦♦
Endurance:	19

Royal Archers of Dale

The Royal Company of Archers counts fifty members, hand-picked among the best warriors and hunters of Dale to serve as the personal bodyguard of the king. They are easily recognisable, as they customarily wear black from head to toe. No distinctions of rank or lineage are made in their selection, and every young man in the city dreams of joining the Black Company, as it is often called.

Royal archers are supposed to hone their skill at any occasion, and are thus given license to access any place suited for the shooting of arrows (like any open field). At least a dozen archers are found at any time at the Royal Barracks, either practising by shooting at targets or personally crafting their arrows.

Attribute level:	6
Specialities:	Woodwright
Distinctive Features:	Energetic, Keen-eyed
Relevant skills:	Awareness ♦♦♦, Great Bow ♦♦♦♦
Endurance:	20

Secrets of the - Long Marshes -

The lands opened wide about him, filled with the waters of the river which broke up and wandered in a hundred winding courses, or halted in marshes and pools dotted with isles on every side...

The narrow belt of land flanking both sides of the River Running where it touches the eastern eaves of Mirkwood has been turned into a trackless swampland by the flooding of the river waters over too many years to count. But in more recent times, relentless rains and even a couple of earthquakes have seen the Long Marshes expand their boundaries north, to reach and engulf even the course of the Forest River where it exits Mirkwood to the east. By 2946, the Long Marshes cover an area more than one hundred miles long from north to south, from the eastern borders of the Woodland Realm to the shores of the Long Lake, and south beyond the Mountains of Mirkwood.

A Blighted Land

Players who took part in 'The Marsh-bell' adventure have already visited the Long Marshes, and might find some of the following information familiar. But that ill-famed region is an expanse of rapidly-spreading marshes and bogs, and goes beyond what has been presented before.

To enter the Long Marshes, a traveller needs only follow the River Running as it goes south beyond the Long Lake, or the Forest River to the west. Often, the marshes will offer the same sight, regardless of the chosen direction: a wide, treeless expanse of mires and pools of sullen waters, unmoving but for the river course that stirs them. Here, thick mists rise in the morning, and lift only with the approaching of midday. But the fog never really disappears; rather it changes into a transparent vapour, capable of turning the brightest light of the Sun into the palest radiance.

The dreariness of the region is multiplied where the marshes meet Mirkwood. Under the shadows of the forest all sounds of nature are utterly silenced and only chill breezes move the drooping branches of the trees that rise from the waters.

Concerning Blighted Places – a Clarification

The rules found on page 57 of the Loremaster's Guide detail what happens when a company of adventurers enters an area qualifying as a blighted place. From the way the rules have been presented in that chapter, it seems that players are required to make Corruption tests every time they cross areas rated as *Wild lands*, *Shadow lands* and *Dark lands*, making for a rather unforgiving rule.

The original intent of the rule was that it is always left to the discretion of the Loremaster to determine whether a place must be considered blighted or not. *The Blighted Lands* table must be used when the Loremaster has decided that an area is indeed blighted, to determine the frequency of the required Corruption tests.

> *For example, the text for the Marsh-bell adventure applies the rule as intended, when on page 130, under the Entering Mirkwood paragraph, the bulleted text states that "The part of the Long Marshes that is inside Mirkwood qualifies as a blighted place."*

Under this interpretation, it is possible for an area found within a region classified as *Wild*, *Shadow* or even *Dark* not to require any Corruption tests to traverse.

As far as the accumulation of Shadow is concerned, the various region types as classified on the Loremaster's map serve as guidelines for the Loremaster to decide whether the region currently traversed by company is blighted or not, with *Free lands* being rarely blighted, and *Dark lands* being mostly so.

When is an area blighted?

If the Loremaster isn't sure and needs a hard and fast rule to determine if an area currently traversed by the company is blighted, he can roll the Feat die a number of times based on the region type:

Roll the Feat die once if the area is inside Free or Border lands, twice for Wild lands, three times for Shadow lands, and four times for Dark lands. If the Feat die produces a result, the area is blighted, and the company is required to make Corruption tests as per the table on page 57 of the Loremaster's Guide.

The Feat die could be rolled additional times if there are other reasons to consider the place to be unwholesome. For example, an area that has been inhabited for centuries by minions of the Dark Lord, or is currently infested by them; the soul of a village has been tainted by a terrible murder or act of treason, or the spirit of a place is being poisoned by dark sorcery, etc...

Marsh Plants

...lily-flowers nodded their half-opened heads in the grass: deep green grass beside the pools, where falling streams halted in cool hollows...

Companions who have successfully collected some curative herbs during the Fellowship phase may enjoy their effects during the next Adventuring phase (see the *Collect Marsh Herbs* undertaking at page 12).

Reedmace

Beds of these plants are found especially in the vicinity of the Long Lake. Reedmace is a tall grass with long leaves that flowers in spring. At that time, its top part develops into a mace-like head. Reedmace often grows taller than a Man.

Farmers harvest Reedmace for food, and cook its leaves or grind the plant into flour. Wise women learned to boil its rootstock to make a salve capable of speeding up the healing of wounds.

- If you collected Reedmace during your last Fellowship phase, for the duration of the following Adventuring phase every time you make a **Healing** roll to treat a wound, thedifficulty of the roll is lowered by two levels (TN -4).

Kingcup

These are bright, yellow flowers that appear when the winter snows start melting away. They turn dark and dreary bogs into pleasant places, and thus may trick unwary travellers to enter the dangerous terrain they grow upon. It owes its name ("king's buttons") to an old

legend concerning Girion, Lord of Dale. Stories tell how he led his armies into the marshes in the dying days of winter, to trick his enemies into thinking he deserted his folk. He returned in spring, his host reinforced by Elven warriors, wearing yellow flowers in his hair and upon his breast.

Farmers use Kingcup as lucky charms to protect their homes, and say that wearing its flowers protects a traveller from harm.

- If you collected Kingcup during your last Fellowship phase, for the duration of the following Adventuring phase your results do not trigger Hazards while on a journey.

Hagweed

Hagweed is a floating plant, found covering ponds of still water in green carpets of minute green leaves. Deceptively harmless-looking, these plants thrive in stinking waters where bodies of animals and travellers alike have sunk to rot. Hagweed is indeed a serious threat to travellers as, at dusk or when the sky is overcast, a horse or pony might easily stumble in the deep pools they cover, thinking to find firmer terrain.

Hagweed owes its name to the fact that many stories tell how marsh hags and trolls like to lurk beneath the surface of ponds covered by hagweed, as corpse candles often appear over such pools of stagnant waters and attract the unwary. If collected, the leaves of the hagweed can be brewed into a drink that strengthens the spirit.

- If you collected Hagweed during your last Fellowship phase, for the duration of the following Adventuring phase every time you make a Corruption test, the difficulty of the roll is lowered by one level (TN -2).

Water-lily

A beautiful floating plant with oval leaves and white or yellow flowers, the Water-lily is found wherever the Forest River and the River Running slow their courses in winding loops, but it is not encountered under the shade of Mirkwood at all. Its flowers open in all their beauty only by midday, to close again when evening approaches. Water-lilies are collected as decoration, and placed in bowls filled with water or woven into garlands. A drink prepared using flowers and petals of white Water-lilies induces a fortifying sleep, while the rare red Water-lily is said to reinforce the fighting spirit.

- If you collected white Water-lilies during your last Fellowship phase, for the duration of the following Adventuring phase every time you rest you recover twice as many Endurance points as you normally would.

- If you collected red Water-lilies, raise your Damage rating (ranged or close combat) by one for the duration of the following Adventuring phase.

Marsh Monsters

Several creatures hide among the bogs and stagnant pools of the Long Marshes, profiting from the remoteness and unwelcoming nature of the place. Some among them are found exclusively within the confines of the swamps, and their activity has greatly worsened the reputation of the region.

Hobgoblins

Hobgoblins are an especially malevolent race of Orcs bred in the North in ages past. They are tall and gaunt, with long limbs and flat, almost noseless faces. Only a few members of that fell race survive today, in dark caverns beneath the Grey Mountains and under the Mountains of Mirkwood. Like the smaller Goblins of the mountains, they hate the light of the sun and rarely venture far from their lairs, but are exceedingly powerful at night or when prowling in darkness (their small but acute eyes and extraordinary sense of smell let them see perfectly even in total darkness).

Cruel and cannibalistic, Hobgoblins are never encountered with other breeds of Orcs. They also barely tolerate the company of Trolls, and prefer to conduct their raids with the help of Wolves and Great bats.

Hobgoblin:

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	**Hate**
36	5
Parry	**Armour**
4 +3 (great shield)	2d
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 2
Movement, 2	Custom, 1
Perception, 3	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Orc-axe	3
Bite	3
Special Abilities	
Denizen of the Dark	Horrible Strength
Hate Sunlight	No Quarter

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bite	4	👁	14	-
Orc-axe	5	👁	16	break Shield

Notes

Bite: *Hobgoblins have rows of serrated teeth.*
Orc-axe: *Hobgoblins use axes manufactured by Orcs of more ingenious breeds.*

Marsh-hags

These solitary monsters appear to be large and twisted Water-goblins, with long arms and iron-hard claws. They are called hags as their heads seem covered by thick tresses of green hair, giving them the appearance of horrible, wicked crones. Marsh-hags hide in watery chambers beneath deep stagnant pools, waiting for an unfortunate traveller to stumble upon their hiding place.

When a victim is within its reach, the Marsh-hag emerges to drown and devour its victim, and then retreat to its subaqueous haunts. When faced by a serious threat, like a group of men-at-arms or well-prepared adventurers, several Marsh-hags emerge together and confront the menace: while one hag seizes an opponent, another slashes at the victim with its claws.

Marsh-hag:

Attribute Level	
5	
Endurance	Hate
16	4
Parry	Armour
4	2d
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 2
Movement, 3	Custom, 2
Perception, 2	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Slash	3
Special Abilities	
Seize Victim	Snake-like Speed

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Iron Claws	6		15	-

Marsh-ogres

Poor Bilbo sat in the dark thinking of all the horrible names of all the giants and ogres he had ever heard told of in tales...

Some of the more terrifying tales surviving in the North talk of horrible man-eating Giants who were said to prowl lonely moors and bogs in search of prey. The most dangerous among them are said to have once lived in the marshes to the east of Mirkwood. No one has seen an Ogre in recent times, and the old and wise among the Men of the Lake say that they retreated among the mists of the bogs when Smaug took residence under the Lonely Mountain - few monsters were a match for a great Dragon! But now Smaug is dead, and the Marsh-ogres could emerge once again from their stinking retreats to threaten Lake-town and its prospering inhabitants.

A Marsh-ogre is a huge monster, as big as a Mountain-troll. Ogres are savage and beastly, and speak no languages spoken by Men, Dwarves or Elves.

Marsh-ogre:

Attribute Level	
6	
Endurance	Hate
80	6
Parry	Armour
5	2d
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 1
Movement, 2	Custom, 0
Perception, 2	Vocation, 0
Weapon Skills	
Smash	3
Special Abilities	
Great Size	Strike Fear
Mangle*	

***Mangle:** If the creature's main form of attack has just hit producing a great or extraordinary success, reduce its Hate point score by one point to immediately roll a second attack on the same target using the creature's primary weapon.

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Smash	Attribute bonus		12	Knock-down
Notes				
Marsh-ogres pummel their enemies using both their hard-knobbed hands.				

Knockdown: The target has been knocked down by the force of the blow. A character who is knocked down cannot choose to be 'knocked back' to lessen the impact of the blow that knocked him down. A character who has been knocked down cannot change his stance and will spend his following round recovering his fighting position, unable to take any further action that turn.

the men of - the lake -

The Men of the lake *heroic culture* in the following pages is meant to be an optional character build. It has been designed for those players who would like to create an adventurer belonging to the population of Lake-town itself after the reconstruction of Dale (in several instances, the core set presents the lake-men and the inhabitants of Dale as belonging to the same cultural group).

The following options are based on the Bardings culture and might be considered a heavily modified variant of that.

Men of the Lake

They had been wealthy and powerful, and there had been fleets of boats on the waters.

The denizens of Lake-town and the inhabitants of Dale are two separate folks sharing a common heritage. Esgaroth was first founded by merchants coming from Dale, but soon the city grew independent from that powerful city of Northmen, and ended up outliving it when Smaug destroyed Dale and scattered its population. For almost two centuries the survivors of Dale and the original Men of the lake lived together under the threat of Dragon-fire, until their destinies were suddenly sundered by the flight of the Black Arrow.

Today, the city of Dale has been rebuilt and its crown restored to the head of the rightful heir of Girion; one of the first pronouncements of King Bard has been the recognition of the independence of Esgaroth and the rule of its council. The Men of the lake busied themselves for many years with the great works needed to build their town anew, and the refounded Esgaroth emerges today from the surface of the Long Lake as a testimony to their strength of purpose.

The Men of the lake are among the most enterprising and ambitious inhabitants of Wilderland. Even in their darkest years they never completely stopped looking beyond the borders of the Long Lake, and the most daring among them travelled far when everyone else cared only for their own defences. Today, Lake-town sits in the middle of a crossroads of opportunities, with a stronghold of Dwarves needing provisions and an ambitious young kingdom of Men to the north, and an ancient realm of Elves to the west.

Description

The Men of the lake distinguish themselves from their neighbours, the inhabitants of Dale, by their greater love for 'modern' things and exotic novelties, a contrast with the Bardings' healthier respect for tradition. Where the wealthiest among the men and women of Dale display their status wearing gold bracelets and torques, or pins and brooches with precious stones, the inhabitants of Lake-town favour rich furs and fine-woven fabrics, often the product of foreign craftsmanship. Their differences extend beyond mere appearance though: Bardings are said to prize nobility and lineage, while Lake-men value above all men or women who elevate themselves through resourcefulness and daring.

Standard of Living

Since the death of the Dragon, trade has steadily become more profitable than ever. With every passing year more wealth goes up and down the Running River, as the demand for the goods that only Esgaroth is able to provide increases - with the Kingdom under the Mountain and Dale adding their requirements to those

of the Elves of Woodland Realm, the Men of the lake rank as belonging to a Prosperous culture.

Men of the Lake Adventurers

The everyday occupations that make up the busy life of a young merchant or fisherman of the Long Lake do not leave room to develop a thirst for adventuring or other flights of fancy. It needs a particularly venturesome soul to take heed of old songs, rather than be absorbed by "trades and tolls ... cargoes and gold". But when this happens, the proverbial determination of the Men of the lake makes sure that the choice is carried out to the full.

Suggested Callings: Treasure-hunter, Wanderer. The inhabitants of the Long Lake work hard, and now reap the abundant fruits of their labour. But some among them dream of even greater riches - either the unparalleled treasures of ages long past, or the unknown beauty of lands they have yet to visit.

Unusual Calling: None.

What the Master of Esgaroth Says...

- **Bardings:**
  "Rejoice, men of Esgaroth, for a new lord sits on the throne of Dale! No more will we fear the sight of the Mountain, but will see gold once again descend the river to reach the green shores of the lake. Our lake, the rule of which has been recognised today by King Bard in front of our councillors and has been confirmed by the envoy of the Elvenking!"

- **Beornings:**
  "It is a pity that Beorn doesn't see the advantage his own folk might derive from dealing with us. They do not have a lot to offer but for the most uneducated of tastes, with the exception of their celebrated honey-cakes, the secret of which Beorn doesn't seem interested in sharing..."

- **Dwarves of the Lonely Mountain:**
  "Thorin Oakenshield and his company emerged from old songs to bring us back to a time of peace and riches. It is in the name of what they accomplished that our inns and taverns will always welcome adventurers hailing from any land."

- **Elves of Mirkwood:**
  "The Elvenking is wise beyond the reckoning of mortal Men. Has this council grown to be so proud to deem its own judgement superior to that of a monarch who sat on his throne long before our town was built? If there is anything our esteemed predecessors have taught us, it is to use our common sense..."

- **Hobbits of the Shire:**
  "The journey of Bilbo the Hobbit has demonstrated once again that no distance is too great if the reason to get on the road is good enough. And what better reason for a Man of the lake than to find a new market and new goods to carry home? Bilbo Baggins has already sent letters to several traders inquiring about the possibility of buying toys or fireworks from Dale, and I heard stories of this leaf..."

- **Men of the Lake:**
  "What sets us apart from all the realms we know about is that we have chosen not to be ruled by a king or a lord, wishing to take the fate of our community in our own hands instead. A man of the lake doesn't seek fame or fortune for himself, but to gain an eminent position in the roll of the benefactors of our town."

- **Woodmen of Wilderland:**
  "The denizens of the western eaves of Mirkwood are as we were before our ancestors followed the Running River to the south and east: they are brave and proud, but also simple and unlearned, unable to recognise the true worth of what they possess. It is our duty as distant kinsmen to be as teachers to them, opening new trade routes to bring them goods and tools they have never dared imagine, in exchange for what they fail to fully appreciate."

Cultural Blessing

– Tenacious –

They began the planning of a new town, designed more fair and large even than before...

The Men of Esgaroth are quick to find and exploit the positive in everything they experience, however little it seems. Every defeat is a chance to learn, every blow suffered is a lesson taken by heart.

- When a Man of the lake is wounded, or fails at a roll with seriously negative consequences, he may spend a point of Hope to earn an Experience point. Eligible rolls are, for example, all Fear tests made during combat, all Corruption tests, or any failed roll deemed suitable by the Loremaster.

Starting Skill Scores

Common Skills

Copy the following skill ranks onto the character sheet and underline the favoured skill:

Awe	0	Inspire	0	Persuade	2
Athletics	2	Travel	2	Stealth	0
Awareness	1	Insight	2	Search	0
Explore	0	Healing	2	Hunting	0
Song	2	Courtesy	2	Riddle	2
Craft	2	Battle	1	Lore	0

Weapon Skills

Choose one of the following two Weapon skill sets, and record it on the character sheet:

1) Great Bow 2, Sword 1, Dagger 1
2) Sword 2, Bow 1, Dagger 1

Specialties

Choose two Traits from:

Boating, Fishing, Swimming, Minstrelsy, Trading, Woodwright

New Trait: Minstrelsy

You have been trained in the arts of singing and playing one or more musical instruments, according to the tradition of the wandering minstrels. Your musical lore runs deeper than most, as you partake of the knowledge of musicians coming from foreign lands.

Backgrounds

1 - Legends spring to life

Your old nanny taught you many songs about the Dwarf-kings of the Mountain, and you grew up thinking that their halls of stone were as real as the bone-littered cave of the Marsh-ogre she told you about when you misbehaved. Now you know that dreams and legends are real, and that there are treasures and wonderful new lands out there, waiting for you to go and seek them out.

Basic Attributes
Body 5, Heart 7, Wits 2

Favoured Skill
Song

Distinctive Features *(choose two Traits)*
Adventurous, Clever, Curious, Energetic, Fair-spoken, Merciful, Merry, Nimble

2 - Restless pupil

Your father spent much of his hard-earned gold on your education, to make sure that one day his rightful heir could aspire to the loftiest positions in the city council. But you seemed able to focus only on myths and legends, your single-mindedness finally proving too much for your teachers and your father's patience. Soon you will have to make a choice: to renounce your dreams or take the road as an adventurer, to be soon forsaken by your family in favour of your younger siblings - unless you return as a hero.

Basic Attributes
Body 4, Heart 6, Wits 4

Favoured Skill
Lore

Distinctive Features *(choose two Traits)*
Adventurous, Clever, Grim, Robust, Secretive, Steadfast, Suspicious, Wilful

3 - Masterful fingers

Everyone who knows you has, at least once, seen you sitting for long hours at your hearth or on the steps of the market-square quays with your knife in hand, whittling pieces of wood into animals, blossoms and leaves. Your ability has even drawn comments from passing raft-elves, their praise music to your ears: you feel a measure of kinship with those graceful and silent forest-dwelling people, and you will one day go and visit their halls with many pillars, to see with your eyes the fabled carven throne of the Elvenking.

Basic Attributes
Body 6, Heart 6, Wits 2

Favoured Skill
Craft

Distinctive Features *(choose two Traits)*
Clever, Curious, Elusive, Fair, Just, Keen-eyed, Nimble, Tall

4 - Lordling

You are born into a family of envoys and diplomats, serving the city council of Esgaroth and its Master for countless generations. Your manners are so naturally dignified that you could have passed for the heir of a noble house - if you weren't born in a town where the only lords are merchant princes. But you don't see that as a flaw; where you are planning to go, the actions of an individual are not lessened in worth by lack of a proper lineage.

Basic Attributes
Body 4, Heart 7, Wits 3

Favoured Skill
Courtesy

Distinctive Features *(choose two Traits)*
Clever, Energetic, Forthright, Merciful, Merry, Steadfast, Tall, Trusty

5 - Watchman

You, your father and his father before him served in the city watch, until the town was incinerated by the fiery death throes of the Dragon. When you saw the great beast fall from the sky, you realised how countless years looking at the distant Mountain had been spent in vain - for of what use is a watchman when his warning is not heeded by heroes who can do something about the coming threat?

Basic Attributes
Body 5, Heart 6, Wits 3

Favoured Skill
Awareness

Distinctive Features *(choose two Traits)*
Clever, Forthright, Grim, Keen-eyed, Suspicious, Trusty, Vengeful, Wilful

6 - Innocence lost

When you were a kid you could be seen running starry-eyed along the busy streets of the city, pulling pranks with your friends on noble emissaries, rich merchants, shady traders, even silent sell-swords and menacing cutthroats. Your stare lost its innocence when one night your older brother disappeared after a night of drunken revelry. You don't know what happened to him - he may have fallen into the water, but you know well that in Lake-town even drunk men know not to walk close to the edge of the quays...

Basic Attributes
Body 5, Heart 5, Wits 4

Favoured Skill
Awe

Distinctive Features *(choose two Traits)*
Clever, Elusive, Fair, Fair-spoken, Just, Robust, Secretive, Vengeful

Endurance and Hope

Men of the lake heroes should calculate their Endurance and Hope starting scores as if belonging to the Bardings culture.

Men of the lake Names

The Northmen of Dale and Esgaroth speak the same language and share a common vocabulary of personal names. To choose a name, see the list for the *Bardings* at page 40 of the Adventurer's Guide.

Cultural Virtues - Men of the Lake

The Men of the lake are renowned throughout northern Wilderland as outstanding archers and boatmen, daring merchants and traders. The same firm determination that has let them safeguard their trades along the river during the dark years of the dominion of the Dragon might also see them succeed as adventurers and heroes.

Bowman of the Guild

A hail of dark arrows leaped up...

You have demonstrated a talent worthy of admission to the Bowmen's Guild of Esgaroth, a honourable association uniting the best archers of Lake-town. Now you may train and share secrets of the trade with many old friends of Bard the Bowman himself, all veterans of the Battle of Five Armies.

- Raise your Standing by 1 point. Additionally, from now on, when you are using a bow or a great bow, you may spend a point of Hope to upgrade the quality of a successful attack roll by one level, turning a success into a great success, or a great success into an extraordinary one.

Merchant Prince

Lake-town was refounded and was more prosperous than ever, and much wealth went up and down the Running River...

Your family's fortune is rising with the reopening of the trading routes that lead to the markets in the South and East. This increased affluence has started to positively affect your adventuring life, as you may choose a servant from those employed in your household and have him join you in your next endeavour.

At the start of an Adventuring phase you may pick one servant to accompany you.:

Page: a page assists you in all your daily routines, like washing and dressing, and takes care of your clothes and gear. He is at your side during any encounter, making sure that you are properly introduced and providing advice and counsel. When you enjoy the help of a page, you can roll the Feat die twice and keep the best result when you are making any **Courtesy** and **Insight** rolls.

Physician: a physician is an older servant who has long been trained in the arts of taking care of your health. He knows every little ailment you might have suffered from since you were a child, and possesses the knowledge to prepare a remedy. As long as you are assisted by a physician, you can roll the Feat die twice and keep the best result when you are making a **Healing** roll.

Porter: a porter helps you in carrying your gear when you are adventuring. When you are making a Fatigue test, you can roll the Feat die twice and keep the best result.

Scrivener: a scrivener is a personal servant who can read and write. He is usually well-learned and keeps a daily record of your exploits. If you are employing a scrivener you can roll the Feat die twice and keep the best result when you are making any **Lore** and **Riddle** rolls.

With the exception of a physician, a servant in a rich trading family is usually a young boy, often a minor relative of modest ambition. Regardless of his duty, your servant is no fighting man, but is considered to be always around and eager to perform his assigned task.

Shield-Fighting

There had been fleets of boats on the waters, and some were filled with gold and some with warriors in armour...

You have learnt to wield a shield like the boatmen of Esgaroth do when they fight to repel enemies trying to board their ships.

- If you are fighting using a shield of any type, when you successfully hit an enemy roll the Feat die again: on a roll of 8+ you inflict an additional loss of Endurance equal to your Damage rating plus the Encumbrance

value of the shield you are using (1 for a Buckler, 3 for a Shield, 5 for a Great Shield).

Trader's Savvy

They still throve on the trade that came up the great river from the South...

Some say that "fair speech may hide a foul heart", but you have lived among merchants and traders long enough to know that pleasant words are always received better than harsh ones when dealing with strangers.

- When you are about to play out an encounter, you can attempt to raise its Tolerance rating making a roll with any custom skill (**Song**, **Courtesy** or **Riddle**) against TN 14. On a successful roll, add +1 to the Tolerance of the encounter, +2 if the roll was a great success, or +3 if the roll was an extraordinary success.

Water Legs

As soon as the raft of barrels came in sight boats rowed out from the piles of the town...

Life on the lake has taught you how to move appropriately when on board a moving boat. Now that you have taken up adventuring you can exploit your superior balance to your advantage even when you are on dry land.

- When an opponent is attacking you in combat, before the dice are rolled, you may spend a bonus Success die due to a Combat advantage to get a bonus of +3 to your Parry score. Additionally, if you are fighting on a boat, a raft, or other precarious or risky surface (for example, an Elven tree platform, a rope bridge) you receive one free Combat advantage bonus die during Onset.

Cultural Rewards - Men of the Lake

Collecting valuable objects has always been a favoured occupation among the richest Merchant lords of Lake-town. Among many a cloth of gold wall hanging embroidered in the East or a set of ivory masks from the South sometimes hide precious items of unusual craftsmanship.

Brazen Armour (mail armour)

Men-folk out of the East favour suits of armour made of overlapping brass plates, or composed of small scales arranged in a mesh, like the scales on a fish or the feathers of birds. Many of these elaborate coats have been hanging on the walls of the great hall of Lake-town, waiting for heroes worthy to wear them.

- A Brazen armour is the equivalent of a suit of mail armour, but wearing it allows you to roll one additional Success die on a Protection roll against an attack made with a edged or blunt melee weapon (swords, axes and clubs), and one Success die less against spears and arrows, or other types of penetrating attacks.

Keening Bog-stone

Among the most unusual and rare possessions of a lake-men household are these unassuming whetstones, small flat pebbles never bigger than a pigeon egg, black in colour and faintly traced with green veins. They can be obtained from the oldest and most superstitious fishermen of the town, who swear they get them in exchange for iron tool offerings left in certain areas of the Long Marshes.

- If you carry a Keening Bog-stone in a pouch or wear it as a necklace, it vibrates and emits a soft wailing sound when a creature possessing the *Hate Sunlight* or *Denizen of the Dark* special abilities is close (within 100 yards). Additionally, the first attack you aim at such a creature will provoke an additional loss of a point of Hate.

Serpent Scimitar (sword)

Exotic blades from the distant South are the most sought-after collector's items among the more fashionable merchants of Lake-town. Most of those that find their way to the North are useless ceremonial blades of cheaply damasked iron, with lacquered hilts and scabbards set with coloured stones. A rare few are the work of truly superior craftsmanship, quick and deadly weapons in the hand of a skilled fighter.

- When making a melee attack using a Serpent scimitar, ignore any Parry rating bonus your target has that is due to them carrying a shield.

Men of the Lake

Frida, daughter of Finnulf

You are your mother and father's only child, born under a roof that long awaited the arrival of a strong male heir. Members of your family have sat in the city council since there was one in Lake-town, and many things were expected of you. You have realized soon enough that you would never fulfil your parents' desires fully, but that didn't prevent you from trying. You learned your courtesies, but you never forgot to take a boat and go practice your archery at least once a day.

When King Bard of Dale brought down the Dragon you were little more than a child, but now you fully grasp the consequences of that deed: the world is not in the grip of ancient terrors any more, and many paths lay in front of those who will dare tread them.

The One Ring™

Name: Frida, daughter of Finnulf

Culture: Men of the Lake **Standard of Living:** Prosperous

Cultural Blessing: Tenacious *(learns from mistakes and harm)*

Calling: Wanderer (additional trait: Folk-lore) **Shadow weakness:** Wandering-madness

Experience — Total:

Valour: 1

Wisdom: 2

- TRAITS -

Specialities: boating, minstrelsy

Distinctive Features: energetic, tall

- ATTRIBUTES -

Attribute	Score	Favoured
Body	4	5
Heart	7	9
Wits	3	6

- COMMON SKILLS -

Skill	Rank	Skill	Rank	Skill	Rank
Awe	□□□□□□	Inspire	□□□□□□	Persuade	■■□□□□
Athletics	■■□□□□	Travel	■■□□□□	Stealth	■□□□□□
Awareness	■□□□□□	Insight	■■□□□□	Search	□□□□□□
Explore	□□□□□□	Healing	■■□□□□	Hunting	■■□□□□
Song	■■□□□□	Courtesy	■■□□□□	Riddle	■■□□□□
Craft	■■□□□□	Battle	■■■□□□	Lore	■□□□□□

- SKILL GROUPS -

personality ◇◇◇
movement ◇◇◇
perception ◇◇◇
survival ◇◇◇
custom ◇◇◇
vocation ◇◇◇

- WEAPON SKILLS -

Weapon	Rank	damage	edge	injury	enc
Great Bow	■■□□□□	7	10	16	3
Sword	■□□□□□	5	10	16	2
Dagger	■□□□□□	3	ᚠ	12	0
	□□□□□□				

Damage: 4 — Ranged:

Parry: 3 — Shield:

Armour: 2d — Head gear:

- REWARDS -

- VIRTUES -

Water Legs *(can profit from superior mobility)*

- GEAR -

weapons: Great bow, sword, dagger enc 3,2

armour: Leather corslet enc 8

shield: enc

Endurance — Starting Score: 29 — Fatigue: 13

Hope — Starting Score: 15 — Shadow:

Weary

Miserable

Wounded

The One Ring™

Name ______________________________

Culture: Men of the Lake

Standard of Living: Prosperous

Cultural Blessing: Tenacious

Calling ______________________ Shadow weakness ______________________

Experience

Total

Valour

Wisdom

- TRAITS -

Specialities ____

Distinctive Features ____

- ATTRIBUTES -

Body ◯ Favoured ◯

Heart ◯ Favoured ◯

Wits ◯ Favoured ◯

- COMMON SKILLS -

Awe	◇◇◇◇◇◇	Inspire	◇◇◇◇◇◇	Persuade	◆◆◇◇◇◇
Athletics	◆◆◇◇◇◇	Travel	◆◆◇◇◇◇	Stealth	◇◇◇◇◇◇
Awareness	◆◇◇◇◇◇	Insight	◆◆◇◇◇◇	Search	◇◇◇◇◇◇
Explore	◇◇◇◇◇◇	Healing	◆◆◇◇◇◇	Hunting	◇◇◇◇◇◇
Song	◆◆◇◇◇◇	Courtesy	◆◆◇◇◇◇	Riddle	◆◆◇◇◇◇
Craft	◆◆◇◇◇◇	Battle	◆◇◇◇◇◇	Lore	◇◇◇◇◇◇

- SKILL GROUPS -

personality	◇◇◇
movement	◇◇◇
perception	◇◇◇
survival	◇◇◇
custom	◇◇◇
vocation	◇◇◇

- WEAPON SKILLS -

________	◇◇◇◇◇◇	damage ____	edge ____	injury ____	enc ____
________	◇◇◇◇◇◇	damage ____	edge ____	injury ____	enc ____
________	◇◇◇◇◇◇	damage ____	edge ____	injury ____	enc ____
________	◇◇◇◇◇◇	damage ____	edge ____	injury ____	enc ____

Damage

Ranged

Parry

Shield

Armour

Head gear

- REWARDS -

____

- VIRTUES -

____

- GEAR -

weapons ______________________ enc

armour ______________________ enc

shield ______________________ enc

Endurance

Starting Score

Fatigue

Hope

Starting Score

Shadow

Weary ◯

Miserable ◯

Wounded ◯